

16th Annual Government Financial Management
Conference

Hello. I am Corrine Eilo of the Denali Commission. Please let me introduce my colleague Michelle O’Leary. We are both with a Federal agency called the Denali Commission, located in Anchorage Alaska. The Commission had the pleasure of presenting to this conference last year on how our agency internally tracks our funding dollars through our Microsoft accounting system called Great Plains. Today, we are here to demonstrate how we externally present that data (and more) to the general public: the American taxpayer.

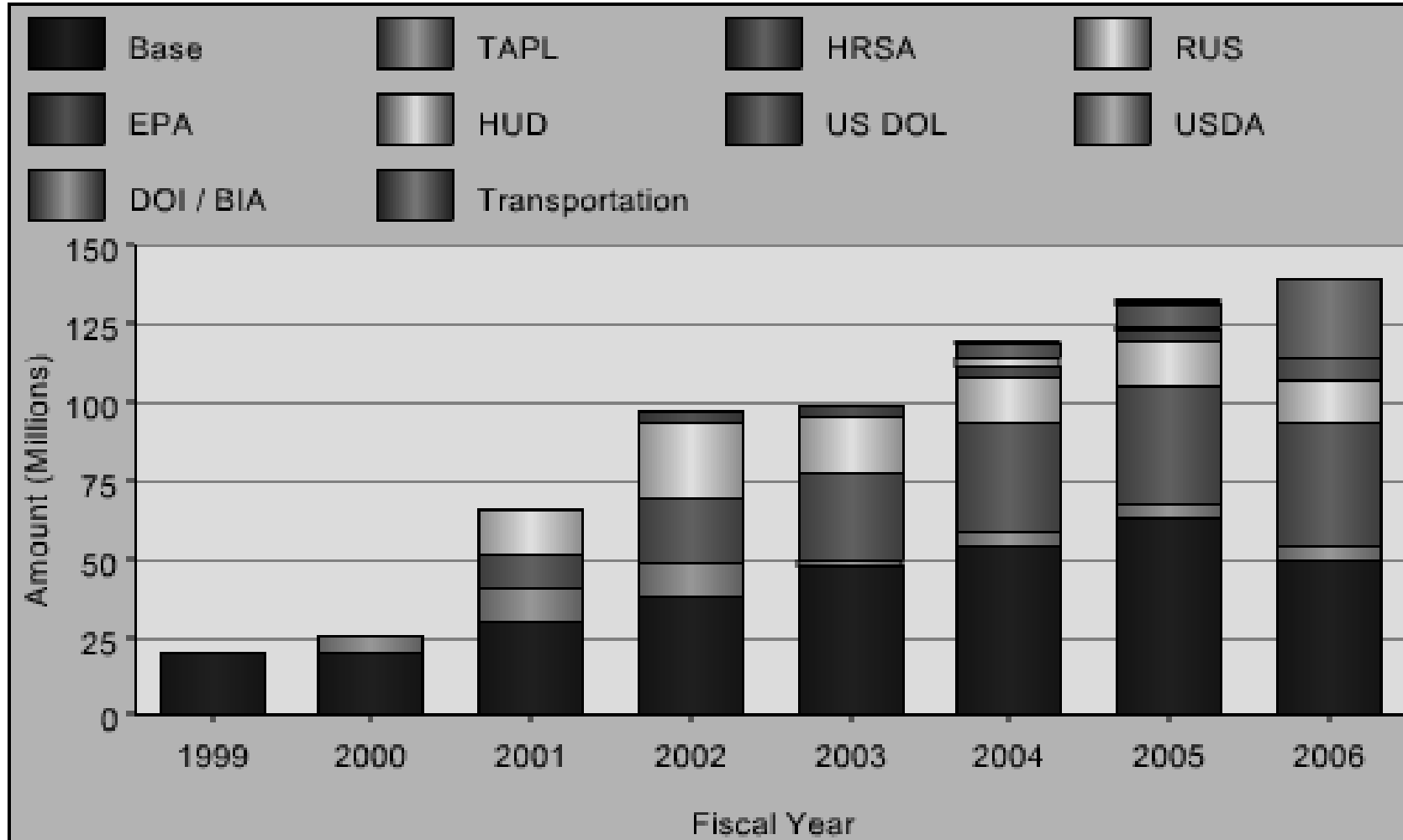
Corrine Eilo
Michelle O’Leary
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But first, let me give a bit of background about our agency. We began operations in 1999 with a \$20 million budget. Our task was clear: the agency was created to resolve infrastructure problems that existed in rural Alaska. In the beginning, our sole focus was on power needs. In particular, diesel fuel tank projects that were at environmental risk and could have resulted in loss of fuel (heat) for small villages into the winter.

Each year since then, the funding of the Commission has increased. With the increase in funding, we have seen a larger array of items to be accomplished within our Mission. We are now involved in a number of areas that all contribute to improving the conditions in our 200+ villages across the State. To ensure that these village residents receive our health and community projects in an efficient and effective manner, we have chosen to partner with many public and private partners in order to move swiftly. The Co-Chair positions are filled by both State and Federal officials with the remaining five positions filled by a cross-section of interests including construction, the University, unions, an Alaskan Native Corporation and a municipal group that represents over 150 communities.

For construction purposes, transportation of goods can be very costly, often by barge with a limited window of travel due to weather conditions much of the year. This restriction forces our Commission to move grants swiftly to our recipients so that orders for materials and supplies can be placed in a timely manner. Missing the shipment of the barge, very often means missing the entire construction season in rural Alaska.

In addition, movement of workers to construct our projects can also be quite costly. Though the Commission promotes the use of local hire whenever possible, very often our projects are led by and completed by workers from Anchorage or Fairbanks. Just like supplies, it is critical that the transportation of workers also be planned well in advance to ensure the correct talent is in the right place at the right time. All of these coordination needs force the Commission to be nimble and flexible when distributing our funds.



The sources of additional funding for the Commission has come from various Federal agencies. In return, through formal agreements, these agencies have asked the Commission to perform work within our State. The agencies include: the Department of Labor, the Department of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, USDA and the Environmental Protection Agency. For FY 2006, we have a brand new source of funding from the Department of Transportation. Total annual funding has now grown from our original \$25 million to roughly \$140 million this year.

And, with that increase of funding, comes the need for even more oversight and accountability to the American public. One way the Denali Commission accomplishes this is through what we call our Project Database. I respectfully turn the floor over to Michelle to demonstrate what we call our Project Database.